

WELCOME TO AOTEAROA

"...and a thousand new arrivals from the other end of the world looked at the shore... and wondered what was in store." JOHN PARSONS



'The Immigrants' exhibition

Voyager New Zealand National Maritime Museum

A permanent social history exhibition completed for Voyager National Maritime Museum, The Immigrants utilises interactivity, props and museum objects to create a rich pictorial display exploring the complex forces that brought so many migrants to New Zealand shores.

The key interpretive concept to engage visitors and connect them emotionally with the heart of the immigration story, was the creation of a set of characters based on authentic immigrant stories. Each visitor rips a ticket from the stand at the beginning of the exhibition - this ticket tells the story of one of twelve characters.

The visitor is guided through a visually rich experience which includes a 19th century ship's cabin which rocks and creaks and a salon-hang picture gallery which examines the ideas of arriving in New Zealand as an immigrant. Stories of the voyage itself and the experience of arriving and settling in a new land are interwoven throughout the exhibition. The exhibition closes with the opportunity to spin a wheel of fortune to

discover the fate of the character on the ticket the visitor took at the beginning of the exhibit.

After successfully producing a smaller permanent exhibition - Landfalls - for Voyager, the same team was assembled to work on the larger The Immigrants exhibition. Pearson & Associate Architects were engaged as exhibition designers and worked on the spatial planning of exhibition themes, lighting design, exhibition cabinetry and furniture design. The Letter Q were engaged for art direction and graphic design, exhibition colour palette, image research and the concept design of the ticket and wheel of fortune interactive component. Object Support constructed the wheel interactive, designed and fabricated all object mounts, designed case layouts and installed the displays. All companies involved in the development of the exhibition worked collaboratively with each other and alongside key Voyager exhibition and collections team staff.

The extensive, large-scale wall graphics

along with all other print and vinyl components were produced by Big Colour. Savory as key building contractor were responsible for the fit-out, exhibition furniture and painting.

Resene Tia Maria, Resene Moroccan Spice and Resene Bootleg were chosen for the 'The Immigrants' entrance and the first section of the exhibition, Push/Pull. Old suitcases, leather, wood, book cloth, and printer's ink (used in posters from the period on display in this section) inspired the colour selection. Alongside the need to select colours that would complement the black and white photographs and other imagery, they also needed to work as appropriate tints for colouring large-scale hero images.

These are all rich, warm colours - used in combination they create an inviting, enveloping space with strong visual impact. The palette supports the rich tapestry of human stories the visitor is about to encounter.



Once the visitor passes through the 19th century rocking ship's cabin – a dark, atmospheric rough-sawn timber-clad space – they move into a contrasting cabin from a 20th century immigrants voyage. **Resene Dutch White** was selected as the paint finish for this space, as a slightly 'dirty', yellowed white - curatorial research into the likely colour used historically suggested this would evoke this period and create the right mood for the small second-class cabin space.

After exploring the two different cabins and thinking about the different types of voyages migrants would have experienced, the visitor moves into a new section of the exhibition - Welcome to Aotearoa. **Resene Tall Poppy** was an obvious choice to create a rich red beacon to draw the visitor through the darker spaces. Evoking a 19th century drawing room, Resene Tall Poppy creates an appropriate backdrop to a salon-hang of framed portraits and landscapes which open on hinges to tell immigrant's arrival stories.

The final section, Becoming New Zealanders, required a change in pace and dynamic. The preceding spaces were mostly low stud with rich, warm paint finishes. In this last section, with its notably higher stud, we wanted to emphasise a sense of openness and contrast. It is a space which shares personal stories of bravery, entrepreneurialism and innovation from people who made New Zealand home. A soothing palette inspired by sea, sky and forest created an appropriate canvas - **Resene Reservoir** was the main colour selected, with **Resene Green Room** and **Resene City Limits** in support.

As a final experience, the visitor spins the wheel of fortune to find out how the story ends for their character. The entire exhibition colour palette is brought together harmoniously in the wedges of the spinning wheel.

Resene City Limits in Resene SpaceCote Flat was also used for the ceiling spaces in the first (entrance and Push/Pull) and last sections (Becoming New Zealanders) as an alternative to the standard choice

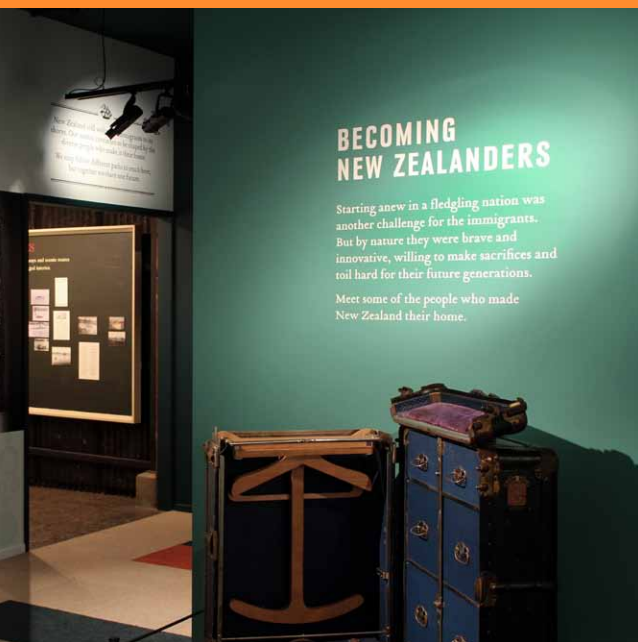
of black. Both of these spaces have high studs in contrast to the cabins in the central exhibition space. The colour is dark enough to absorb light and disguise piping and other fittings/facilities (in the same way black would) but with a depth and character that added to the overall feeling of the space.

All colours for The Immigrants were selected for their richness under exhibition grade lighting. The Letter Q know from experience when specifying colours for exhibitions that we often need 'turn up' the colour in order to achieve the desired effect. Colours that look great in natural light often look washed out – a colour needs to have dynamic range and look strong in both spot lighting and shadows. Resene colours are richly pigmented so they illuminate and perform exceptionally well under exhibition spots. All colours were specified in the Resene SpaceCote Flat finish - this product is both durable and matte which is important for both lighting walls dramatically without reflection and for the application of exhibition graphics and decals.



The colour range is also what draws us as designers to Resene - the palettes are not just limited to 'safe' colours suitable for domestic interiors. We have always found a wide range of high-chroma options to choose from, that satisfy the demands of the exhibition work we do. When working on exhibition and display projects with tight budgets we have found that being bold with colour is the most cost effective 'bang-for-your-buck' method of achieving a lot with a little.

The other factor when working in exhibitions is that the colours selected often have to leap across different media as seamlessly as possible. We start by selecting the colours for each space within the exhibition from the Resene colour ranges – this leads the colour palette for graphics within the different spaces. We then use the cmyk colour specs from the Resene website to set up swatches in our graphic files, so we can match our printed colour to the paint finishes. The final step is working very closely with our printers (Big Colour) during the proofing process to achieve accurate colour matches – paying particular attention to placements where large-scale wall graphics meet the paint finishes.









Resene California



Architectural specifier: Pearson & Associates Architects
www.pearsonarchitects.co.nz

Building and painting contractor: Savory www.savory.co.nz

Client: Voyager New Zealand National Maritime Museum
www.maritimemuseum.co.nz

Colour selection: The Letter Q www.theletterq.co.nz

Exhibition art direction, image research, graphic design: The Letter Q
www.theletterq.co.nz

Object mounts and installation, interactive build: Object Support
www.museumworkshop.co.nz

Photographer: The Letter Q www.theletterq.co.nz

Print production: Big Colour www.bigcolour.co.nz

